
SUBJECT

HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO HOUSING

KEY FACTS

- The *National Housing Strategy Act* requires the Government of Canada to develop and maintain a national housing strategy to support improved housing outcomes for Canadians.
- The *National Housing Strategy Act* recognizes the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

RESPONSE

- **Our Government strongly believes that all Canadians should have access to safe and affordable housing. That is why we introduced Canada's first ever National Housing Strategy and introduced legislation making sure future governments do the same.**
- **The *National Housing Strategy Act* represents a historic milestone for housing in Canada. It recognizes the right to adequate housing as a fundamental human right.**
- **The *National Housing Strategy Act* also requires the federal government to inform Canadians on the progress of the National Housing Strategy. As such, our first report will be tabled in 2021**
- **The Act also creates a Federal Housing Advocate and establishes a National Housing Council. Together, they will help identify systemic barriers to accessing affordable housing and advise the Government on housing policy in Canada.**
- **As a matter of fact, the applications for the National Housing Council launched over the summer and closed on October 14.**

If pressed on the Timing of the Federal Housing Advocate:

- **A selection committee, led by Privy Council Office, will submit a list of the most highly qualified candidates. The Federal Housing Advocate will then be appointed by the Governor-in-Council.**
- **I note that publication of the Notice of Opportunity for the Federal Housing Advocate position is still anticipated in 2020**

If pressed on the Timing of the National Housing Council:

- **After a rigorous review process, on November 22, 2020, I announced the nominations of the members.**
- **The new National Housing Council members were selected for their leadership in their respective fields, professional expertise, and/or lived experience. Their mandate is to further the housing policy of the Government of Canada and advance the National Housing Strategy.**

BACKGROUND

Since 1976, Canada has been part of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognizes that everyone should have the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing. Through the National Housing Strategy, the Government will support the gradual realization of this right.

The National Housing Strategy Act

The National Housing Strategy Act provides for, among other things, the development and maintenance of a national housing strategy and imposes requirements related to the mandatory content of the strategy:

- a) set out a long-term vision for housing in Canada that recognizes the importance of housing in achieving social, economic, health and environmental goals;
- b) establish national goals relating to housing and homelessness and identify related priorities, initiatives, timelines and desired outcomes;
- c) focus on improving housing outcomes for persons in greatest need; and
- d) provide for participatory processes to ensure the ongoing inclusion and engagement of civil society, stakeholders, vulnerable groups and persons with lived experience of housing need, as well as those with lived experience of homelessness.

It also establishes a National Housing Council and requires the appointment of a Federal Housing Advocate. It requires the submission of an annual report by the Advocate on systemic housing issues and the submission of periodic reports by the designated Minister on the implementation of the strategy and the achievement of desired housing outcomes.

Finally, the Minister must, before March 31, 2021 and within every three years after that date, cause a report to be made on the effectiveness of the National Housing Strategy, with respect to the achievement of the desired outcomes, and the initiatives related to its implementation.

Federal Housing Advocate

The Federal Housing Advocate has the mandate to receive submissions and consult with persons and civil society organizations with respect to systemic housing issues faced by persons who are members of vulnerable groups and persons with lived experience of housing need, as well as persons with lived experience of homelessness. The Federal Housing Advocate is to analyze and conduct research on such issues, including barriers faced by those persons, as it sees fit.

The Federal Housing Advocate will participate in the work of the National Housing Council as an ex officio member.

National Housing Council

The purpose of the Council is to furthering the housing policy and the National Housing Strategy by providing advice to the Minister, on its own initiative or at the request of the Minister, including, among other things, on the effectiveness of the National Housing Strategy; and undertaking any other activity that the Minister specifies.

The Council will be composed of two co-chairpersons and not fewer than 9, but not more than 15, other members.